



MARYLAND DEFENSE FORCE BASIC TRAINING PROGRAM



History of the MDDF Self-Study Module

Overview

It is evident that the Founding Fathers intended a predominant role for a militia. The United States Constitution, Article I, Section 8 authorizes Congress to raise and support a militia. Today, United States Code governing the National Guard provides in §109 that any state may maintain troops of National Guard and Defense Forces.

Maryland has a proud heritage of defending and serving its communities in times of war and disaster. From the volunteer colonial militias of the 17th century, to the citizen soldiers that responded to America's great conflicts that have touched the state, Maryland has come together to protect our shores and borders in times of distress and disaster. That inherited spirit of service gave birth to The Maryland State Guard during the past two World Wars and is the origin of the Maryland Defense Force.

Rise of the National Guard from Militias

From 1780 until 1947, the army of the U.S. was very small, and only exceeded 500, 000 personnel in the Spanish American War, and exceeded a million in the Civil War, World Wars I & II, and the Korea, and Vietnam. The Militia Act of 1792 created a universal militia obligation for citizens, which was replaced by the Dick Act of 1903. The 1903 Act established the principle of a National Guard as a reserve force and re-affirmed the right of the federal government to implement that force either at home or abroad. During that period, the War Department preferred a reserve with no state control and supported the notion that the National Guard was the militia mentioned in the Constitution. This idea crystallized in the National Defense Act of 1916, which established an army reserve and designated the National Guard as the primary national military reserve. The Armed Forces Act of 1952 was the first law that required Governor approval of training plans and that the force would be available if state duty required.

The Total Force Doctrine (TFD) ensures that the guard is closely associated with the active army and subsequently the guard trains with "active" army units and often augments, compliments that unit. The TDF concept eliminates the need for a large standing army to meet national defense needs. Because of TDF, the National Guard's units and individual service personnel have participated in numerous training exercises, police actions, humanitarian operations, and actions, such as Operations Uphold Democracy and Just Cause, and the Persian Gulf Wars, for example.

Evolution of Maryland's State Guard

Aside and apart from the evolution of the National Guard as described above, the original Maryland State Guard is traced to 1917. The Maryland State Guard is however, directly tied to the National Guard and its federal implementation. In anticipation of U.S. entry into World War I, the Commander-in-Chief, President Woodrow Wilson started calling Maryland guard into federal service in April 1917. Governor Emerson Harrington called an extraordinary session of the Maryland General Assembly requesting passage of a law for "organization and maintenance" of a state guard and militia and that measure was S.B. 12 Emergency Law, signed into law in June 1917. In August of 1917, all of the Maryland National Guardsmen were drafted into the United States Army and that same month, Governor Harrington issued an executive order to organize, equip, and arm, "a regiment of infantry, to consist of the necessary field, staff and noncommissioned officers, headquarters supply companies, and twelve letter companies." The force, titled Second Regiment, Infantry, Maryland State Guard was comprised of many veterans of the Spanish-American War. In January 1920, Governor Albert C. Ritchie ordered the disbanding of the 2d Infantry, effective February 1920.

Then in the 1940's, Congress approved a bill to induct the National Guard, which was signed by President Franklin Roosevelt in October 1940, the amendment also allowed for State Defense forces, as units that could not be "Federalized," but soldiers were still able to be drafted as individuals. For the first time, state militia or defense forces could be formed during peacetime. By June 1941, thirty-seven states had activated state defense forces, including Maryland. Under the direction of the state legislature and Governor Herbert O'Connor, Defense Force Legislation (S.B. 38) was signed 11 days after Maryland's National Guard Units had been mobilized in anticipation of World War II. Major General Dwight Mohr was named the Commander of the Maryland State Guard in May 1941.

The Maryland Defense Force was comprised of 12 battalions: Nine infantry battalions, medical battalion, engineering battalion, and a military police battalion. Created prior to the integration of the armed forces in 1947, it included the 11th Infantry Battalion, an African-American infantry battalion; only eight other state guards had the foresight to recognize the importance of such provisions. The Maryland State Guard responded to many state emergencies, and provided statewide security for highways, railroads, bridges, and water utilities, starting in January 1942. When the Maryland National Guard began its return from World War II, the state guard began disbanding and its headquarters was deactivated in February 1947.

Although a provision for a State Defense Force remained in the Militia Code, none appeared for almost another 40 years. Another force that was part of the World War II era was known as the "Maryland Minuteman." Maryland's program was among the nation's largest, training in close order drill, using their own weaponry, and being closely linked to the then-existing Maryland State Guard, although legally separated. The Maryland Minuteman were disbanded somewhere between April 1944 and June

1946, but the organization still appears within the Militia Codes as part of the Organized Militia of Maryland.

The disbanding of the Maryland Defense Force or State Guard was prompted through a Congressional Resolution in July 1947, and virtually all states disbanded their units by the end of that year. During the Korean War legislation sponsored by the National Guard Association supported a peacetime maintenance of State Military Forces, with federally furnished pay, uniforms, equipment, and weaponry, again authority rose for a state home defense force, which expired in 1952. In 1956, perhaps weary of the activation and inactivation, permanently amended the National Defense Act to permit voluntary maintenance of a State Defense Force.

A meeting convened from June 1-15, 1968 and developed the plans for a modernized state defense force, titled, "Maryland State Guard Planning Directive" and included tables of organization and equipment. Those plans would lay dormant for another 15 years. In January 1983, a Maryland House Bill authorizing a state guard passed by a vote of 119-2, the bill passed by unanimous vote the following day in the Maryland Senate, and was signed into law by Governor Harry Hughes.

July 1, 1983, marks creation of the Maryland Defense Force (MDDF), first called the "Maryland State Guard" and later changed to its present name by the General Assembly in 1990. Adopting the motto, "Ready When Called" *Officio Vocante Parati*, the MDDF began its present course, gaining acclaim and notice from other states in the process. By 1995, twenty-five states revitalized and organized their state defense units to fill the state defense void. As these various organizations were reestablished, the states' interpretation of their roles and missions varied. In 1994, the Maryland Defense Force was tasked with armory staffing, possible suppression of terrorism, search and rescue, and disaster relief along with community support and youth outreach.

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the subsequent War on Terrorism crystallized a need for layered state defenses and support organizations. With Reserve and National Guard operational activities at a high not seen since World War II, the Maryland Defense Force was tasked with a new mission:

"To provide competent supplemental professional and technical support to the Maryland Military Department as required."

To this end the Maryland Defense Force actively recruits professionals with strengths in law, clerical (multi-denominational), medicine, and health care. The response from the citizens of Maryland, such as yourself, has been excellent and is what creates the noteworthy force-in-readiness of which you play a significant role.